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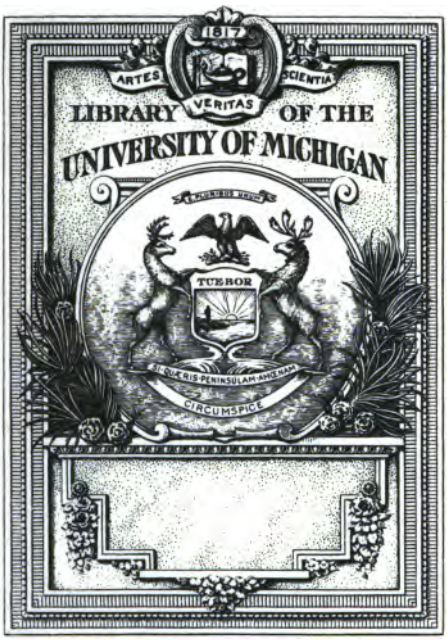

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THE CHRISTIAN *and* AMUSEMENTS

Is dancing sinful?
Is card-playing wrong?
Is theater-going harmful?

By
WILLIAM EDWARD BIEDERWOLF

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THE CHRISTIAN *and* AMUSEMENTS

THIS is not a pleasant task I am about to perform. How certainly do I wish there were no occasion for an address such as I am now going to deliver. I assure you therefore it is more from necessity than from choice that I am to speak upon the subject announced for this service. That subject is the subject of Amusements and the Christian's relation to them. I recognize the fact that in speaking upon the theater, the cards and the dance I am dealing with what are beyond question the three greatest sources of amusement among the American people and I know that your prejudices are very apt to be very strong one way or the other.

I am not going to argue with you. I am simply going to tell you some things I know to be true and trust to your own enlightened Christian judgment, your own high sense of honor and your own fine sense of distinction between what is delicate and refined and modest and what is indelicate and coarse and suggestive to decide for yourself, regardless of what anyone else thinks, what your future position concerning these things is to be.

I cannot understand how any right thinking person can possibly disagree with me in the position which the facts I am about to set forth have con-

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strained me to take. And yet I dare hardly hope that every one will acknowledge as much because I know how strong your prejudices are. Some of you have come here to-night and have said to yourself and doubtless to others, "I'd like to see the preacher convince me that these things are wrong." Well, he won't, for you know that little couplet "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still," but if any number or even one shall this day be true to his or her better self and the Spirit of God and begin to do the will of God, I shall be repaid for all it means to me to speak to you at this time.

In the very beginning I wish to lay down two great principles as a foundation upon which to build.

First. The principle of sacrifice must be put into practice in every life that hopes to be highly successful. This is true of the merchant; it is true of the professional man; it is true of the student and it is true of the Christian.

> The heights by great men reached and kept,
> Were not attained by sudden flight;
> But they, while their companions slept,
> Were toiling upwards in the night.

And the same thing is true in Christian experience. You will remember the poet told us something about "men rising on stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things."

And if your religion is not a religion of sacrifice, a religion that sacrifices the lower for the higher, it is not the religion of Jesus Christ.

Second. The particular things we are called upon to sacrifice depends very much upon our position—not our position in the church but our position in the world. The teaching of the New Testament will not for one moment admit that certain things are perfectly innocent for you because you are simply a church member but sinful for me because I am a preacher. I have the same right before God to do what another Christian does and what is wrong for a preacher is wrong for any kind of a Christian. And I have an idea that this whole question would not wait long for a solution and the church would become suddenly pure if its members allowed themselves only the indulgences to which you would be glad to see your pastor give himself; and I am equally sure that if you knew your pastor to be a wine-drinking, card-playing, theater-going, dancing man, you would have little confidence in his preaching and prefer some other type of minister to be with you in sickness and most of all when you were dying.

Now, there must be a difference between a person who is a Christian and one who is not. I know the Bible and nature say, "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap," and whether a man is a Christian or not he must sacrifice his overindulgence in strong drink if he does not want to

reap a diseased body, a ruined reputation and a life of shame. There are other things we may not do regardless of our position unless we suffer, but there are certainly some things which the world may allow itself with clear conscience but which we, because we are Christians, ought not to do. I do not know what Jesus meant when He said, "What do ye more than others?" unless He meant something like what I have just mentioned.

"What do ye more than others?" Alas! there is so often too little difference between the man who professes to be a Christian and the man who does not, if one must judge by the life that is lived; and if there *is* no difference, if there are not some things to which the world is given, which the Christian must forego, then *what a miserable farce all our preaching and all our profession really is!*

Let it be understood therefore that I am speaking more especially to those who profess to be Christians. Certainly if it shall appear that the things under discussion to-night are impure and unholy and harmful in themselves, I shall expect everyone who claims to stand for that which is highest and purest, regardless of your profession, to register yourself against them. But if I can even so much as prove them to be questionable, it shall certainly be just as much expected of the one who professes to be a Christian that they shall give God the benefit of the doubt in making their deci-

sion and follow the teachings of His word about such things.

The Card Table

Let us begin with the cards, commonly called the euchre deck. And I know the very first thought, the thought already rising in the minds of some of you is concerning the question of the difference between playing with these cards and others, such as the flinch deck or the authors, and I make haste to reply that so far as the cards themselves are concerned there is none, nor do I think we can reasonably claim that the playing with these or any other decorated pieces of pasteboard may be properly called a sin in itself, and yet the difference between the use of these cards is as great as the difference between any two things can possibly be.

The wrong lies in what history has shown them to lead to. The question is not to be settled by what *might* be done or what *might* come from these indulgences, but *by what history has shown to be their invariable outcome.* The card table has been condemned because it leads to a waste of time, but this and many other accusations against it I shall not notice because they are equally true of other games which we hold as innocent. *I repeat again that the question must be settled by what the history of the game has proven to be true* and the one sweeping condemnation of the euchre deck is that it is and always has been the devil's chief tool for

gambling. I do not say that men could not gamble over authors or dominoes or croquet or any other game, but the fact remains that they seldom or never do. If the devil forsook the euchre deck and did with any other game what he is doing to-day with it, I would assuredly drop that game from my amusement list and substitute the euchre deck in its place. But the fact remains that the euchre deck is the gambler's instrument.

What is the first thing a young man sees when he enters a gambling hell? Is it authors or flinch or parchesi or any other such game? No, it is the euchre deck, just like the one he used to see in his home and just like the one lying on the center table or in the stand drawer in your home, mother, to-night. On every table the card deck is seen. The air is foul with impure breath and fouler still with the oaths and coarse language and harsh laughs that are heard as the chips and the glittering coins mingle their seductive sounds with the clinking of the glasses and the snapping of the pasteboard cards.

Every gambler and every drunkard and every thief and every tramp and the keeper of every brothel and every low-down lecherous debauchee has a pack of filthy, finger-worn euchre cards in his possession, the same cards which are used to play the same games which some of you are teaching your children to play in your home.

Nine-tenths of all the gambling in America, if you except pool selling, the race track and the

Board of Trade is done with the euchre deck. It is the gambler's tool.

It is also a sad fact, but one which no one can deny, that nine-tenths of all the gamblers in this country learned to play cards in the home. You say, you are going to allow your boy to play in the home so he will not want to play when away from home. But what sort of philosophy is that for a game that kindles a passion in the human breast? Gambling is a passion and you might as well say I am going to give my boy a little whiskey in the home so he will not want any when outside of the home.

Mr. John Bigelow, writing on gambling, said: "Nine people out of ten when they for the first time accept an invitation to join in a game of whist or poker have no more suspicion of the passions they may be about to nurse than the maid of sixteen when she engages in her first flirtation."

John Philip Quinn, the converted Chicago gambler, said the card-playing home was "the kindergarten for the gambling saloon."

In 1893 the Civil Federation of Chicago interviewed 3,000 professional gamblers, all of whom, with but few exceptions, said they learned to play cards in the home.

In a men's meeting recently conducted by one of the most successful pastors in Ohio, a converted gambler, and ex-saloon keeper made the following statement, which created a profound impression.

He said: "I have been in the saloon business with a gambling room attached, for the last four years, and claim to know something about what I am going to tell you. I do not believe the gambling den is nearly so dangerous, nor does it do anything like the same amount of harm as the social card party in the home. I give this as my reason: In the gambling room the windows are closed tight, the curtains are pulled down; everything is conducted secretly for fear of detection, and none but gamblers as a rule, enter there, while in the parlor all have access to the game, children are permitted to watch it, young people are invited to partake in it. It is made attractive and alluring by giving prizes, serving refreshments and adding high social enjoyments.

"Perhaps you have never though tof it, but where do all of the gamblers come from? They are not taught in the gambling dens. A 'greener' unless he is a fool, never enters a gambling hell, because he knows that he will be fleeced out of everything he possesses in less than fifteen minutes. He has learned somewhere else before he sets foot inside of such a place. When he has played in the parlor in the social game of the home, and has become proficient enough to win prizes among his friends, the next step with him is to seek out the gambling room, for he has learned and now counts upon his efficiency to hold his own. The saloon men and gamblers chuckle and smile when they

read in the papers of the parlor games given by the ladies for they know that after awhile those same men will become the patrons of their business. I say, then, the parlor game is the college where gamblers are made and educated. In the name of God, men, stop this business in your homes. Burn up your decks and wash your hands."

After he had taken his seat another converted ex-gambler arose and said: "I indorse every word which the brother before me has just uttered. I was a gambler. I learned to play cards not in the saloon, not in my own home, but in the houses of my young friends, who invited me to play with them and taught me how."

I am indebted to my friend, M. B. Williams, for the story of James Kilgore. It is well known among religious workers. James Kilgore came from the country to the city of Cincinnati, a young man to seek employment. He secured living accommodations at the home of a Presbyterian elder. A few nights after his arrival, when supper was over the euchre deck was brought out and the young man was invited to play. He said he did not know how, but the youngest daughter of the family who had invited him told him they would teach him the game. He then said his father and mother thought it wrong and did not wish him to play. "Oh," said the young woman, "I'm afraid your father and mother are a little out of date; you don't think there could possibly come any harm

from it or else my papa who is an elder in the church would not permit us to play!" And there he stood, a big, bashful country youth with a beautiful city girl poking visions of love into his eyes, and he just allowed himself to be made her prisoner and she took him off to the table. He seemed to have a natural capacity for the game and before long he and his fair partner could beat any other couple in the neighborhood.

One day out of the office a little early he was met by the young man from this same home and invited over to a room to play a little while. He found himself in a room connected with a saloon, and altho' he resented the imposition, in other days he found himself there again. Money was introduced to make the game interesting and Kilgore usually played the winning card. Finding that the shortest cut to fortune lay in his skill with cards it was not long until he was launched on a gambler's career. One evening he saw an easy prey in a young man just from the country. He said, "Hello! how are the old folks down on the farm," and asked him if he didn't want to see the city. He took him to a place of ill repute with a gambling room attached. When he knocked, some one said, "Who's there?" and Kilgore replied, "Open up or I'll show you." He had been there a few nights before and had gotten into trouble and threatened to come back and clean the place out. Thinking he had come to keep his threat, a sharp report of

a pistol was heard. He felt something warm spatter on his cheek and heard a dull thud on the sidewalk. He reached up with his hand and wiped the young man's brains from his face; ran to the Queen and Crescent depot and took the first train for the south. He opened a gambling room in a Tennessee town and one day the money was piled high around the table. Every one felt the final struggle must end in blood, and just as James Kilgore was about to throw the lucky card there was a quick flash of knives and his gashed and lacerated body rolled on the floor. They dragged him out into the street. Some one said, "He is the one that has ruined our boys; it's good enough for him." But a Christian woman with a kinder heart said, "He's some mother's boy." She took him to her home and cared for him in the name of Christ, but that did not reform him. He went down to Pensacola, Florida, and one night on his way to a gambling room he passed the church where a crowd was pushing in to hear John B. Culpepper, the evangelist preach. He elbowed his way in and heard the burning words of that man of God; the memories of his old home came back, his heart was touched, he went to the front and on his knees in tears he gave himself to God. He became a preacher of the Gospel, but he preached it with his body all cut and gashed and his soul all scarred with sin. But the worst of it all is that thirteen of the best years of his life were worse than wasted,

given to iniquity with their awful sowing to the wind and all because an elder of the Presbyterian church could see no harm in playing cards in his home. You say, "He might have become a gambler anyhow." Yes, that is true, but it certainly furnishes no excuse for the part played in his sad career by one who bore the name of Christ.

That gambling is more widespread to-day than ever before is easily proven by its literature. Fifty years ago there was but one or two newspapers devoted wholly to sports and these were only weekly or monthly but to-day we have over forty weeklies and one or two dailies. And did you know that fifty years ago there was but very little card playing in the home. It was the exception when after supper the table was cleared and the parents brought out the euchre deck and taught their children the gambler's game. And do you know that *the widespread gambling of our country has kept pace exactly with the increase of card playing in our homes.* And, mother, father, it's an awful charge to make, but before God, it's true, that in a large measure for every mother's heart that's bled, for every wife's heart that's been broken, for every home that has been left to battle with poverty, shame and disgrace, for every shattered character and ruined life, for every glittering blade that has been thrust across the table and bathed in human blood, for every gambler who has lost his life and sent his soul to hell, because of an acquaintance

with cards and a passion for the game, the card-playing homes of this land are, I say, before God and man, in a large measure responsible.

Some years ago in a large convention of gamblers the chairman said: "Gentlemen, whatever else you do, encourage card playing in the home." Now mother, I want to ask you calmly and quietly and tenderly, do you want the same thing encouraged in your home that the gambler wants encouraged there? Is it possible that you are of one mind with the gamblers about this matter? And is not the mere fact that the gamblers of this country want cards played in your home enough to make you stop and seriously consider whether you want it there or not? What more need be said.

The Theater

And now what shall be said of the theater? I am not going into a wholesale condemnation of the drama, the opera and every sort of theatrical performance because I believe in the possible redemption of the stage and when it is redeemed I believe it will be one of the most powerful agencies for good in the whole world.

I am not going to say there is nothing good upon the stage to-day, for there are plays, though they are sadly in the minority, which one could witness with a real moral uplift, and I am only sorry that the condition of the theater as an insti-

tution is such to-day as hardly makes it possible for many reasons, for a consistent Christian to enjoy even that which would do him good and could do him no possible harm.

It is, therefore, not upon the imaginary theater, not upon the theater as an ideal, but upon the theater as it actually exists to-day and as the history of the world has always shown it to be that we must speak to-night.

The criticisms which I now bring to your attention you will notice are not made by ministers or church people but by critics of all classes and professions.

First. The best literary criticism from the time of the theater's first appearance until the present unsparingly condemns it as the polluter of public morals. Xenophon and Plato and Plutarch and Socrates and Seneca and Tacitus and all the best statesmen and writers of Greece and Rome and every other country denounced the theater unmercifully, and declared it to be a place where men and women of delicate feeling and refinement could not go.

Oh, you say those old philosophers and statesmen and men of public position were not enlightened and didn't know anything. Very well then, we will come a little further along.

Mr. Leckey, the great European historian—and by the way, you know Mr. Leckey was not noted for being fanatically religious like your poor narrow-

minded minister for whose opinion on these matters you never did have any respect—but Mr. Leckey, in his splendid volume "Rationalism in Europe," declared that the theater in the Middle Ages "brought about the degradation of the church and all religion."

Macaulay said of the English theater: "From the time that the theaters were opened they became the seminaries of vice." And Sir Walter Scott said it was a place fit only for people of indelicate and unrefined taste.

"Oh," you say, "Leckey and Macaulay and Scott were prejudiced and blinded." Strange, that everybody should be in that condition but you! But come a little further on.

It is an interesting fact that there is on record today a resolution of the American Congress passed soon after the Declaration of Independence, which reads as follows:

"Whereas, true religion and good morals are the only solid foundation of public liberty and happiness.

"Resolved, That it be and is hereby earnestly recommended to the several states to take most effectual measures for the discouragement and suppression of theatrical entertainments, horse-racing, gaming and other such diversions as are productive of idleness, dissipation and a general depravity of principles and morals."

"Oh," you say, "our fore-fathers and statesmen

of our American Congress were all fanatics and fools!" Very well, let us come further along.

A few years ago in Chicago when the true condition of the theater was laid bare by Herrick Johnson, among other comments of like character by the Press are the following, brought to our attention by this writer.

The *New York Evening Post:* "There has probably been a greater mass of meretricious rubbish set on the stage during the last ten years than during the whole of its previous existence." This rubbish the *Post* interprets a little further on as an "appeal to the baser instincts."

The *Philadelphia Press:* "The stage has reached that point of degradation which Dr. Johnson deprecated and Byron deplored."

The *Chicago Times:* "Twenty-five years ago such an exhibition as is now nightly made in the modern comic opera, in the most matter-of-fact way, would have come well-nigh to landing the whole party in the police station."

The sporting editors of four of the leading newspapers in one of our cities when asked recently for a confidential opinion of the theater replied, every one of them in substance, that almost without exception the plays of these nights are full of vile suggestion and utterly unfit for anyone who wants only clean thoughts to enter their mind.

"Oh," you say, "I don't care what the press says." All right.

Second. The best dramatic criticism condemns the theater in its present day condition.

Now these dramatic critics are not religious fanatics but devotees for the most part of the stage as an art and have the best interests of the profession at heart. One is simply compelled to turn in disgust at times from the criticisms they seem compelled to pen. "Outrageously indelicate," "licentious buffoonery," "disgusting," "demoralizing, lewd and lascivious," are some of the terms with which they describe our present day theatrical exhibitions. Some of them are even now prophesying that the day will come and it is not far distant when the stage will fall to pieces of its own corruption if it is not soon purified.

Mr. Charles M. Bregg, dramatic critic for the *Pittsburg Gazette-Times*, said of the theater a couple of weeks ago. "It represents in some respects the most violent worldiness, the most flaunting immorality, the most defiant sin and the most vicious influence. It seduces and corrupts under our very eye. Though it is not to be ranked with the saloon, yet it can do more harm, for it gets the girls.

Mr. Clement Scott, London's distinguished theatrical critic, said: "It is nearly impossible for a woman to remain pure who adopts the stage as a profession. Everything is against her, and what is more to be deplored is that a woman who endeavors to keep her purity is almost of necessity doomed to

failure in her career. It is an awful thing to say, and is still more terrible that it is true, but none who know the life of the green-room will deny it." Mr. Scott says he is not a "canting prig or a Pharisee who makes broad his phylacteries and says 'Thank God I am not as other men are,' " and so far as I know, he has never been so accused, but if there is any truth at all in what he says about the stage I wonder if a really consistent child of God can be indifferent to its patronage.

Third. The best professional criticism is against the theater as it now exists. Mr. A. M. Palmer, one of the oldest and most successful theater managers, a man known all over both continents, says: "The chief themes of the theater are now as they ever have been, the passions of men—ambition and jealousy leading to murder; anger leading to madness, and lust leading to adultery and death."

Even the professional actors do not hesitate to lend their testimony. John Gilbert, the veteran actor, in discussing just such plays as you Christian people are attending, has written, "I say, as an actor, without any hesitation, that such plays have a very bad influence on nearly all people, especially on the young."

"None of my children," said Macready, the actor, "shall ever with my consent, on any pretense, enter a theater or have any visiting connection with actors or actresses."

Edwin Booth said, "I never permit my wife and

daughters to witness a play without previously ascertaining its character."

Mr. Dumas, the play-writer, said, "Let me say, once for all, you must not take your daughter to the theater."

Mr. Sothern, over his own signature said, "I have known some of our best performers who have found it necessary to first attend and see a play before they would allow their wives and daughters to go. Why was this necessary?" he asks. "Why," he answers, "because they knew there was very little cleanness in those places, and who better than they should know?"

Surely there must be some question about the theater to call for such comment from every quarter and every kind of criticism.

Fourth. Because of what has already been said none will be surprised to hear that the best religious criticism has always been against the theater.

You will certainly, after having listened to all the authority just quoted, permit a few references to the opinion of the church.

More than 250 years ago in a published list of authorities there were not only 71 ancient fathers and 150 modern Catholic and Protestant writers, but 54 Synods, Associations and Conferences of the church of Jesus Christ pronounced against this form of indulgence, and the church to-day is as much, or more pronounced (if that be possible) than ever. Such a verdict ought to have some weight.

"Oh," you say, "I don't care what the church says or thinks about this matter." And you a church member!

And all the while we are thinking of this criticism there is one sad fact which keeps staring us in the face. And that is, to a very large degree we ourselves are responsible for making the theater what it is.

The *New York Press* in commenting upon this subject, said, "The drama of the hour is artificial. Instead of teaching humanity that good is preferable to evil, it mocks our tested notions of morality and panders to the passions and nervous greed for excitement. And yet," says the *Press*, "no one is to blame for such a state of affairs but the public."

To a certain extent the theatrical management is to be exonerated. If you ask, "Why do they not put only clean and moral plays upon the stage and thus elevate the standard of the theater," they reply, that they are not in the elevating business. They are quite willing to leave that to Christians and people in general. As a business they must make it pay or quit and they have long since found that people in general will not very long patronize a clean, pure presentation upon the stage, and nothing therefore is left for them but to pander to the depraved and vitiated tastes of their patrons.

Every effort on the part of the management to reform the theater has utterly failed. Edwin Booth tried it in New York. On the spot where

the Mc Creary's mammoth department store now stands, Edwin Booth once declared he would have a moral theater and he lost $600,000 in the venture. Henry Irving tried it in London but it didn't succeed. Ben Jonson tried it and failed. Hannah More wrote moral plays but the management told her they could not use them because they would not pay. It is true, as Wayland Sinks has said, that *there is not one theater in our country today that is sustained or can be made profitable by pure drama or morally unobjectionable plays.* Even the best of Shakespeare's plays fall flat as financial ventures; people will not patronize them for any length of time, unless there is with them some noted star like a Booth or a Barrett whom of course you would not want to miss the privilege of seeing and hearing, but you will and do patronize any sort of acting under other circumstances. There is not a theater in this city that could prosper the year through on the cleanest of Shakespearian drama or other morally wholesome plays, unless it be the continued stand of some one play of great reputation. Here is an illustration of this fact just clipped from a newspaper in Waukegan, Illinois, a few days ago:

"SHAKESPEARE NO GO HERE"

"Schwartz management finds that production of classic plays does not pay. William Owen greeted with deplorably small house; though piece was good." Then follows part of the manager's letter:

"I would respectfully request that you send no more Shakespearian plays to Waukegan unless they have a noted woman for a lead. Waukegan doesn't want them."

What now are the specific charges against the theater?

The chief of these, some would have us believe, lies in the effort upon the actor. For a man to play perfectly the part of another character he must take himself out of himself and put himself over so far as possible into the character he wishes to simulate. To play the part of Iago the villain, one must study Iago, think Iago, talk Iago, act Iago and so far as possible be Iago. If the character to be simulated be that of an impure woman, then the pure woman who is to play the part must deliberately plan to think and feel and seem to be impure.

Sir Henry Irving has committed at least 15,000 murders on the stage; Mr. Charles Wyndham has been divorced from 2,800 wives and Miss Ada Cavendish has been foully betrayed and deserted 5,600 times.

I wish to ask those of you of finer sensibilities, who understand just a little the psychology of human nature, if you think that a pure-minded man or woman can live and dwell in an atmosphere like that without deadening somewhat the finer sensibilities of their own nature? And the reputations born by the vast majority of men and women

in the profession is the best evidence of what I am saying. Eleanore Duse, the celebrated actress, says, "The majority of the actors and actresses whose acquaintance I have made are despicable." We do not mean to say that there are no pure-minded men or women on the stage, but these are the exceptions and are almost like Shakespeare's "two grains of wheat hidden in two bushels of chaff." We quoted Mr. Clement Scott, the distinguished dramatic critic, as saying, "It is almost impossible for a woman to remain pure who adopts the stage as a profession," and the history of the profession proves that Mr. Scott understands the subject he has so long and carefully studied. Now, as Dr. Johnson has said, "If the theater is a school of morals, how does it happen that the teachers so seldom learn their own lessons?"

I cannot myself, however, get away from the conviction that the chiefest of all objections to the theater lies in its effect upon its audience.

The specific charge I now make against the theater is that its chief appeal is to the baser instincts of our human nature. Two things will prove this to any fair and pure-minded person.

First. The first is the foul suggestiveness of nine-tenths of the present day plays. I will not make the assertion but will quote again those words of Mr. Palmer, the distinguished theatrical manager, who said, "The chief themes of the theater are now, as they ever have been, the passions of men—

ambition and jealousy leading to murder, lust leading to adultery and death." The management has become even bold enough to call them "seventh commandment plays," and the stage is full to-day of presentations of what an enthusiastic defender of the drama has called "A murderous assault upon all that the family circle holds most holy and sacred." You need only review the plays that have been recently most popular and many of which are now being presented nightly in the best theaters of the country. I will review some of them for you. Of course I shall say nothing of such plays as "Why Girls Leave Home," "The Wages of Sin," "The Confessions of a Grass-widow," and a thousand others like them whose titles may speak for themselves. I shall not refer to the low-class comic opera, "The Isle of Bong Bong," "The Chinese Honeymoon," "The Goo-goo Man," and a thousand others like them, but I will mention a few of the so-called better class plays. They are not on the boards at present in your city so you'll not be tempted to go. Olga Nethersole who outraged the decency of respectable womanhood by her Sappho is here again with a new play called the "Labyrinth." In this play the chief character is that of a woman, the wife of two husbands, who having divorced her first husband because of base infidelity marries another man and later returns to her first love, who is the father of her child. "Tess of the Dubervilles" is a "seventh commandment play"

entirely worthy of the mind that stooped to think it out. "East Lynne" in its entire setting turns upon matrimonial infidelity; adultery is followed by murder; murder by remarriage and this by the reappearance of the first wife to die in the house. How elevating it must be, mother, for your daughter to sit for two hours and a half and follow this all through not only with her eyes but with her mind—revolving it all over and thinking it all through! It helps her, no doubt, to retain the fine, keen, delicate edge of maidenly modesty which is woman's crowning jewel.

In "The Hypocrites" Lennard Wilmore finds himself in a fix which consists in being engaged to one girl and loving another who is about to become the mother of his child and Jessie Milward who plays the rôle of his mother suggests a lie as the best remedy for the situation.

"Pendragon" is a play in which a pure-hearted man is crushed by the revelation of his wife's shame and dishonor. "The School for Scandal," as Dr. Buckley has well said, is a play "the whole of which no woman could read to a man not her husband without giving him good cause to suspect her purity." "Felicia" is a play sustained by illicit intimacy, in which the mother reveals her life of shame to her illegitimate child.

A certain French actress of international repute has just gone through our country on her farewell tour. She has "farewelled" us several times be-

fore. No one who knows anything of Sarah Bernhardt at all will deny that she "panders to the licentious" and her entire repertoire, some of which so many of you have gone to see, even the theatrical press writers call "the Frenchiest of the French."

"Adrianne Lecouvreur" is so thoroughly licentious that one of the Chicago press writers has said, "It is quite as well the words are in an unfamiliar tongue."

"Camille," another of her master productions, which has crowded the leading theaters of the land is the glorification of a woman who has dragged her soul through the foulest corruption that loose virtue can know.

You see I am not searching about for the plays given in low class or even second-grade theaters. These are the nightly productions of the so-called best and first-class stages of the country.

The leading operas are not any better.

Faust is a passion piece in which a young girl Margaret by name is first betrayed and then after her ruin is made to murder her own mother and her illegitimate child.

"Lucretia Borgia" is the shameful story of illicit relationships and is demoralizing in the extreme. "Don Giovanni" as a noted playwriter has said is "the proverbial hero whose career represents the romance of successful adultery and debauchery." "Norma" is one of the leading operas. Do you know who Norma is? I would not dare to tell you.

If I should be so ungentlemanly as to recite in your presence the story of Norma, these ministers, and your husbands and fathers would be justified in rising and driving me from this building. Some of you don't like to hear me say this, but you'll pay a dollar to go and see it.

But in all seriousness I want to ask you now, can you conceive without surprise of a pure-minded, refined, intelligent man or woman making a defense of an institution the secret of whose success seems to lie in making the crowd of which your daughter and your boy constitute a part, familiar with the working of illicit love and the play of criminal passion?

Second. The other thing which proves that the chief appeal of the theater is to the baser intincts of our nature is the indecent display of nudity and the human form. We have actually come to a time when plays which in themselves perchance might pass without censure must needs be stopped several times in the course of the evening while a crowd of girls in tights or otherwise immodestly exposed are given the stage; and if you ask the manager a reason for this intrusion he will give you for an answer a wink of his eye. In one of the best, so-called respectable theaters of Chicago such a play was given, a play interesting enough in itself, intensely so if it's anything like the book, but the play in itself would hardly do for an average American audience; it must needs be embellished

with a shameless exposure of physical beauty, and the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* in commenting upon it said, "Spangles and tights are its charm. Low-cut bodices reveal its interest." The *Chicago Inter-Ocean* said that, but God pity the poor depraved tastes of the people if there is one grain of truth in it.

You need only look at the billboards *sometimes* to get an idea of what may be seen as you sit in your seat before the stage. I can think of nothing more demoralizing to our children as they go on their way to school than to have their minds poisoned with some of these foul and filthy posters which line our streets in the interest of the theatrical life of this country.

I was preaching in the city of Waukegan, Illinois, a short time ago and so utterly vile were some of the bulletins, that over the forms of the women some of the boys of the street had taken their pencils and written all sorts of filthy and unclean thoughts which had been suggested by the lascivious pictures before them. And I say it is a burning insult to the virtuous womanhood of this country, a vile outrage upon the sweet chastity of your wife and your daughter and your sister, and a brazen affront to everything that is pure and clean and holy, that we must permit this carnival of pictured lewdness to go on unmolested before our very eyes.

Now I do not think there is any use to disguise

the fact, or even to try to disguise it, that this exhibition of women with such approaches to nudity and such display of the human form has for its strongest tendency, if not its chiefest purpose, the breeding of thoughts that are unclean behind the on-looking eyes. *The world admits it and we might just as well be as honest.* Go to the pool rooms or where men congregate and hear what they say about it, and see if this is not true. And if the Bible is true when it says, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," how few of the men who sit so frequently before the footlights of the theater can say they have never *there* been guilty of sin.

In one of our largest cities not long ago so bold and hideous did the better-class theaters become in the vile suggestiveness of their plays, that for once the daily press joined the pulpit in crying for their suppression, and it has not been long since, in the city of New York, the city authorities in the name of virtue and decency stopped a play in the very midst of its performance, and I have wondered how many of the seats were occupied by those who professed themselves to be Christians. In the name of the chaste and holy Jesus, who pleased not Himself, what does it mean to be a Christian!

The Dance

Now as to the dance. What shall be said about this indulgence? I speak of course of the round dance; the dance which Byron calls "the endear-

ing, seductive waltz." Human nature is such that we can be none too careful, but it is the dance as carried on in present-day fashionable society which I am now about to discuss and not the old-time minuet and the stately cotillon or not undignified Virginian Reel. But human blood is all too warm for that and the square dance is now only tolerated for a few moments at the beginning as a sop to public opinion for the abandon that comes with the later hours of the night's indulgence.

There are two things I want to say in passing.

First. The hardest young man and especially young woman in the world to win for Christ is the one who is devoted to the dance. In my work as an evangelist I have had scores upon scores say to me, "If I must quit dancing I will not become a Christian," and this is usually said when not a word had been said about the dance. It must be the prompting of a guilty conscience. If the fascination of the dance is so terrible as to cause you to choose it in preference to Christ and the church, that alone ought to stamp it as a great enemy to moral and spiritual beauty.

Second. For every professing Christian who has anything to say in defense of the dance there can be found an unconverted person who makes no pretense at being religious who will say that if they become a Christian they would expect to give up that form of indulgence. I wonder why this is? I wonder if it is because, as Gail Hamilton said,

"The very poise of the parties suggests impurity." I wonder if it is because, as broad and liberal-minded Horace Bushnell said, it is one of "the contrived possibilities of license." I wonder if it be because as Mrs. Gen. W. T. Sherman said after reading "The Dance of Death" that "women of virtue or self-respect who know the contents of that volume would blush to have the dance named to them"; and if there is any truth in these statements or in a thousand others like them from men and women of all kinds and from every rank in life, I wonder if it is possible that people who make no pretense at being religious can see ruin and moral putrefaction where God's own professed children can see nothing but innocent and harmless pleasure? Or I wonder if these people of the world are more honest than some of us who will not admit the truth because forsooth it would rob us of an excitement that appeals to our poor sensual natures?

If there is any truth at all in what has been suggested, the chief indictment of the dance is at once before us.

It has been maintained by others that, unlike the card game and the theater, the dance is immoral in itself, on the ground that the assumption of any improper attitude between the sexes, whether it be behind the curtains of a dimly lighted parlor or on the dancing floor or in the shadows of a moonlight stroll, is necessarily immoral in itself except it be between man and his wife or his betrothed. Think

as you please about that; my concern is about getting you to see something else, and that is, namely, that *the dance has its basis in the passions of human nature.*

Every thing that follows ought to furnish conclusive proof of this statement.

First. The mingling of the sexes in dancing originated in Greece among men of contaminated morals and women of loose, questionable character. There are no square dances in the brothels, and what is done there with the avowed and expressed purpose of exciting the sensual nature, do you think you can indulge without any tendency whatever in that direction?

Second. There is little or no delight in the dance without the opposite sex. The man who dances only with his wife and the girl who dances only with her brother gets tired quickest and goes home earliest. The dance is the only indulgence that requires the two sexes to make it tolerable. Men play cards alone and women do, and engage in all other amusements all alone and the pleasure is often heightened by the absence of the opposite sex but what club or society ever gave a ball to those of its own sex only?

Third. The testimony of those who have danced is worth something. A man came to me recently and said, "I wish you would pray for a friend of mine. He's a splendid fellow, I've just had a good talk with him. He's been married a few months

and he told me that a few nights ago his young wife asked him to go to the dance, and he said, "Mabel, I'm married now, and if you want me to be true to you, don't ask me to go to the dance." A man whose thoughts are unholy is none the less false. Some young men are quite free with their lips. Not all young men are thus guilty, thank God, and the things that have been in their minds never find expression in their words, but young woman, if you could hear the remarks of some of these young men, or know the thoughts begotten at least in their minds by the dance a blush of shame would mantle your cheek to think that you had ever given yourself to their embrace.

Fourth. If the dance did not have its basis in the passions, such a man as Lord Byron, being the man that he was, could never have written about it as he did. Women, you are pure and noble and chaste, but how you could give yourself to the dance after reading the ode to "The Waltz" by the author of Don Juan is a hard thing for a pure-minded man to understand.

Since these things are facts and not speculations there can no longer be any doubt as to why the dance is wrong. I but recently laid down a book containing ten indictments against the modern dance, but because human nature is what it is, any one who understands it at all can see without a moment's reflection that *the chief indictment against the dance is that in its nature, in its tendency*

and in its results it is dangerous to social purity, and that all other reasons for condemning it dwindle away into insignificance in comparison with this.

It ought not to take any facts or figures to prove this. Here are the dancers, locked, you will allow me to say, at least partially in each others embrace, moving as one body across the floor, the man gazing upon the half-concealed charms of his partner, blowing his warm breath upon her exposed arms and breast, that almost magic and ungovernable personal electricity darting between their meeting fingers, their blood heated and quickened with every step until the heat of one body passes into the other. Do you mean to say that a man can give himself to a thing like that hour after hour and not be in danger of having at least the pure white of his soul sullied by that which is unchaste and unclean! That man is not made of putty or marble. He is made as all men are made and these quivering bundles of nerve and passion can well afford to get along without an environment, the tendency of which is in the direction just noted. Granting that none but the purest-minded men ever dance, no man's mind is thought proof, and any indulgence which may cause man to fling away or lose the eternal jewel of chaste thought and in its sequel proves bestial and degrading, is hardly a thing for a consistent Christian to defend. Woman, you may not understand this; but Man, you understand it all and *you know that it is all true.*

No further proof ought to be required. Enough has already been given; but

First. I can prove it by the testimony of the dancing masters. At their recent convention in New York City steps were taken to modify the form of the present day waltz on the ground of its present tendency towards that which is impure. What the dancing masters themselves acknowledge to be dangerous to pure thought and social propriety it remains for professed Christian women of the church to defend as a perfectly innocent and harmless amusement. Has it come to this!

Second. I can prove it out of my own experience. I have God to thank for a heaven sent conscience on social purity even before I became a Christian, but since a young man of 18 I have known the Christ and I have had not only a new inspiration but a new strength in trying to fulfill the command, "Keep thyself pure." I would not think or do a thing of shame, not because of its effect upon myself, either mentally or physically or socially, but because I know it hurts the heart of my Father in heaven who has been so good and kind to me. And yet I know myself as you know yourself, and I say it without shame that the struggle of my life has been just along the line we have been discussing. And I have thought, if a young man who had the inspiration of a Christian ideal, who knew his Christ and had His help and His strength to keep his mind and heart, if he could not give himself

without harm to these things, what shall be said of the young man who has no such inspiration and who does not know the Christ and is a stranger to His help and strength even though he cares to be pure, to say nothing about those who are not so concerned.

Third. I can prove it out of the experience of others. First, on the testimony of young men. In a western town of some eight thousand population entirely given up to the amusements of this world a number of the young women came to me during the revival and asked me about these things and especially about the dance. They said they saw no harm in it and I replied, "Possibly not to you, although there may be, but what about the young men?" "Oh," they said, "we dance with only the nicest young men of the town." And I said, "Who are they," and they said, "Harry C. and George R." and went on to name quite a number of the most splendid young men of the place. Later during my stay I talked with these very same young men. A few of them were inclined to argue a little at first while others were quicker to confess, but every one of those young men without an exception confessed to me in confidence, for I had become their friend, that although they might have gone through the evening's dance without harm at the time, yet when they went back to their homes and laid themselves down on their beds and lived the night with its scenes and its seductions all through again in the

mind there came to them, because of it, thoughts and imaginations which no pure-minded, chaste-hearted young man should ever indulge. In another city recently I was asked by the young men themselves for a confidential talk. About thirty of the best young men were there—high school and business college students, clerks and others. I talked to them of the impure thoughts begotten by the dance and of what these thoughts sometimes led to and I said "Now, fellows, I've tried to be frank with you and I want you to be just as frank and confidential with me; has this been true of you?" and *the hand of every young man in the room went up.* Now if these young men know their own life and experience as they certainly must, then, young women, for their sakes, for the sake of the virtue and character of young men in general who are more strongly and bitterly tempted in certain directions than you are apt to be, you ought, if you are a pure woman, much more a Christian, to think very carefully before you give yourself to an indulgence with them that encourages the things we have mentioned, even though there could be no possible harm to yourselves. You surely do not mean to say that you are in no wise responsible for the virtue of the young men! If you do, in heaven's name, let me ask you "What is your idea of a Christian, anyhow?"

You say, as a young woman, there is no harm to you; I am not so sure of this. I do not care to

argue the matter with you, but it is hard to see how young women can engage in any indulgence without the slightest possibility of danger to them, when it does for young men who give themselves to it that which we have just seen to be true.

Secondly, the testimony of the young women of the world proves the position we have taken and emphatically denies the supposition that there is no harm in this indulgence for them. Many a poor lost girl has been heard to cry in bitter anguish, "Would to God I had never entered a dancing school!"

Prof. T. A. Faulkner, an ex-dancing master of the Los Angeles Academy said of 200 abandoned women with whom he talked personally that while 37 ascribed their fall to various other causes, 163 of them ascribed it to the dancing school and ballroom. The police statistics of this and other countries tell the same sad story. I could simply appall you with what I myself know to be true.

Again, the Roman Catholic Confessional reveals some strong evidence just at this point. A Catholic priest in defending the Confessional had come just to this point when he said, "Another argument for the Confessional is that we at least have the advantage of knowing when our people fall, where they fall and how they fall; and we have found that almost every lapse of female virtue in our community is traceable to the round dance." A noted Catholic Archbishop, no other than Archbishop

Spaulding, of New York, said recently that this was true of 19 out of every 20.

You say you don't believe it. Listen. The facts are all open to investigation and certainly no one with a true heart would think of denying them without investigating for themselves.

You may repeat again, young woman, that it never has and never can do you any harm, and I repeat again that I will not argue the question with you, but I do ask, altogether apart from your Christian profession, altogether apart from what would be pleasing to Him who pleased not Himself, I do ask, Have you no womanly interest in woman-kind?

And now, because all these things are true, for you must bear me witness that this address has not been an abuse but a plain recital of fact,—because these things are true, could any one be astonished if it should be said that this form of indulgence is inconsistent with the Christian's vow, that solemn vow which says, "Renouncing the world, the flesh and the Devil, I take God the Father to be my Father, Jesus the Christ to be my Saviour and the Holy Spirit to be my Sanctifier. I take the word of God to be my rule of faith and practice, and the people of God to be my people; and I give myself, soul and body, time and talents, powers and possessions to the service of the Lord. I do this intelligently, deliberately, sincerely, unreservedly, freely and forever." Could any thing be more solemn? And because the Christian's vow is what

it is and the dance is what it is could any one be surprised to hear that the dance is forbidden by the church?

If any one therefore should ask me to give a single reason why a church member should not dance, I would simply say, "Because your church is against it and says you must not." But you say, "Do all churches take this stand?" Yes, all of them! The majority of them through their official utterances, while in the few which are independent in government and consequently have no such official deliverances, you will find the attitude of its leaders quite as pronounced against this indulgence as that of the others.

Let us begin with the Roman Catholic, the oldest of all. Assembled in Plenary Council at Baltimore the Archbishops put their church on record in the following words:

"In this connection we consider it to be our duty to warn our people against those amusements which may easily become to them an occasion of sin, against those fashionable dances which, as at present carried on, are revolting to every feeling of delicacy and propriety and are fraught with the greatest danger to morals."

Take the Episcopalian church which is so often charged with being lax concerning this question, but this is true only as it is true of other churches where they are not deeply concerned about bringing the lost to Jesus. But listen! Bishop Hopkins

of that church had this to say, "Dancing is chargeable with waste of time, the indulgence of personal vanity, and the premature incitement of the passions, and no ingenuity can make it consistent with the covenant of Baptism." Bishop Meade of Virginia and Bishop McIlvaine of Ohio have said the same thing, while Bishop Coxe whose name has become a household word in the Episcopalian church says the dance is lascivious and warns those who persist in it "that they presume not to come to the holy table."

The Baptist church in her Associations is unsparing in her denunciation of this indulgence.

The General Association of the Congregational Church in the State of Iowa passed the following resolution but a few years ago, "Resolved: that in the opinion of this association the practice of dancing by members of our churches is inconsistent with the profession of religion and ought to be made a subject of discipline."

While leaving the matter of discipline to each church the Presbyterian denomination in its general Assembly has said, "We regard the practice of promiscuous social dancing by church members as a mournful inconsistency, and the giving of such parties for such dancing, on the part of the heads of families, as tending to compromise their religious profession; and the sending of children by Christian parents to the dancing school as a sad error in family discipline."

Among their other deliverances you will find words like the following; words that ought to cut to the quick the conscience of every guilty member of that church. After speaking of the fashionable amusements of the world, and mentioning especially dancing, it is said of the professing Christian who indulges in it, that he "furnishes satisfactory evidence that he has not yet put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, nor put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," and that "He thus brings dishonor and reproach upon his religious profession, throws a stumbling block in the way of sinners, offends them that are weak, and grieviously wounds the Saviour in the house of His friends."

The Church of Christ, the Disciple Church, is as pronounced as any. One of its recognized authorities has said, "Dancing is offensive, not to the ignorant, prejudiced and weak people, but to the best informed, the most pious and devout. If there were nothing else against it, that would stamp it with the seal of condemnation."

In the Methodist book of Discipline, paragraph 248, under the head of "Imprudent and Unchristian Conduct," we find that mention is made of attending dancing parties, patronizing dancing schools, and it is there stated that private reproof shall first be given by the Pastor or Leader, but that upon a second offense the Pastor or Leader

shall take with him one or two discreet members of the church; while upon a third offense; if there be no sign of real humiliation the guilty one shall be expelled.

Well, you say, "I don't care what my church says; I'm going to do this thing anyhow." And is this your idea of a true church member and a consistent Christian! You, who stood at the sacred altar and before God, before the saints of earth and high heaven made your vow not only to renounce the world but to be obedient to the will of your church! Is it possible that you perjured your soul or has it come to this, that you no longer care!

But we are not quite done. We have gathered testimony from every quarter but one. Let us not forget the Word of our God.

It does seem from all that we have seen to be true that some of these things, at least the dance, are as Bishop Meade has said, "unclean and wrong in themselves," but for fear there may be some who even yet will not admit so much, I want to ask how many of you are at least willing to admit in the light of all that has been said that those things are at least questionable. (An almost unanimous show of hands.) Very well then. A Christian will certainly listen to God's Word, if not to any of the other authorities I have quoted. Let us then see what God's word says about questionable things. It says in plain and unmistakable language that for the Christian they are wrong.

Paul in speaking of questionable things says in 1 Cor. 6:12, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient," and in telling us why things which are inexpedient just because they are questionable, are wrong for the Christian, he makes himself very plain; indeed, so plain that no one who wants the truth can miss it. He explains it first from the standpoint of a man's God, then from the standpoint of a man's neighbor and then from the standpoint of the man himself.

First. As concerns God. He says they are wrong because of the danger of misrepresenting Him. By doing these things we sanction a lower tone of Christianity than his approval warrants. In 1 Cor. 10:31, Paul says, "Whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God." If you can conscientiously kneel down and ask God to go with you, it may be right for you to go, if no other question is involved, but unless in that thing to which you give your self the Holy Spirit can glorify Jesus it is wrong for you to indulge. In any undertaking I should first want to know, "Will this please God."

Calling upon one of his parishioners, a certain pastor inquired concerning the daughter who was away at college, and the mother said, "I was just reading a letter from her as you came in; part of it will interest you." And she read a part of the letter where the daughter was telling the mother of

a dance that was to be given by her class; most of her friends were going and she wanted to go herself very much indeed, but she knew her mother did not approve of it and for her sake she was going to stay away. "Well," remarked the pastor, "that's very beautiful of her indeed; you must love her very much." "Love her!" replied the mother, as a tear came into her eye, "I wish she were here now, that I might put my arms around her and tell her how *much* I love her." In some such way as that I would like God to feel toward me, and I am sure He will if I am trying in all things to walk "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."

Second. Then Paul states the question from the standpoint of the man's neighbor. In 1 Cor. 8:9 he says such things ought not to be done "lest by any means my liberty become a stumbling block to them that are weak." We all know what that means, and in 1 Cor. 8:13 he says, "If meat makes my brother to offend I will eat no meat while the world stands." Although I might engage in this thing without any harm to myself, I am furnishing by my example what others take as their justification for doing it, but who are not so discerning or self-controlled as I, and while I may be spared, they may be injured and fall and set their feet in the way that leads to ruin.

Two little boys, one leading his smaller sister were going through the woods. They came to a tree that had fallen across the creek and formed a

natural bridge. The first little fellow bounded over and turning said "Come on, it's easy." But the other gripped his little sister's hand a little tighter and shrank back, saying "I could, but she might fall." And I say to you, that that little fellow had more of the Spirit of Jesus Christ in him than many members of many churches who will not deny themselves some pet indulgence for the sake of some one weaker than themselves.

Third. And then Paul states the matter from the standpoint of the man himself.

(a) In 1 Cor. 6:12, he says such things are inexpedient, "lest I be brought under their power." If these things or any other things have taken such strong hold upon you as to cause you to prefer them to the approval of God or the honor of Christ; if you are at the place where many a young member of the church, has been when they have said "If these things are inconsistent with my being a member of the church, I shall cling to them nevertheless," then for you these things are an evil in your life.

(b) And in 1 Cor. 10:23 he says they are inexpedient "because they do not edify." They hinder growth and fill the church with barren fruitless lives. A prominent Christian worker once said, "I never knew a Christian that began to dance who was not soon missed from the prayermeeting." Having loved this present world Demas-like they soon forsake the things of God. It seems there is

an incompatibility between the two which experience proves will not abide each other.

And then say what we will, the lovely characters of this world, in whose lives the very beauty and gentleness of Jesus have shone with resplendent glory, have not been those whose chief sources of amusement were found in the giddy, venturesome whirl of a Christ ignoring world.

Fourth. And then as if our duty concerning such matters might not in some particular instance be sufficiently clear, even with such guiding principles before us, Paul in Romans 14: 23 sets forth a simple rule that will always point a man to the right side if he has the least desire to do the will of God. He says, "If there is any question about it, don't do it." "Whatever is not faith," he says, that is, whatever is not without doubt, without question, "is sin" and "he that doubteth," says Paul, "is condemned if he does it."

And now what more could man or God say to any one who is honestly seeking the best and highest and purest things of life. Listen to this true story and we will leave you with God to settle this question, if you have not already done it in the deep place of your own soul.

In one of our eastern cities there is living a very happy couple to-day. On the fourth anniversary of their wedding the young wife said to the husband, "Dick, I have been a very happy woman for four years, but if only one thing else could be true

I would be the happiest women in the world." "Well, Mollie," he said, "What is it? I would do anything for you." "Dick," she replied, "If you were only a Christian." "Well, Mollie, are you a Christian," said the young husband. "Yes, Dick," came the answer. "Well, Mollie," said he, "I didn't know it." Dick waited a while and then said, "See here, Mollie, I want to do what is right; you don't swear, do you?" "Why, no," said Mollie. "Well," said Dick, "I don't either. Mollie," he said, "you don't steal do you?" "Why, no, Dick, of course I don't." "Well," he replied, "I don't either." "Mollie, you don't gamble, do you?" "Why, no, what do you mean, Dick, of course I don't." "Well," said Dick, "I don't either." "Mollie," he said, "you don't get drunk, do you?" "Why, Dick! why do you ask such questions of me? Of course I don't get drunk." "Well," said Dick, "I don't either." "Now Mollie," he said, "you drink wine at the receptions don't you?" "Oh, yes," said Mollie, "I do that out of courtesy to the hostess." "Well," said Dick, "I do too." "Mollie," he said, "you go to the theater, don't you?" "Why, certainly," she replied, "I go quite often." "Well," said Dick, "I do too." "Mollie," he said, "You play cards, don't you?" "Why, yes, Dick, where's the harm in that? I play cards, of course." "Well," replied Dick, "I do too." "Mollie," he said, "you dance don't you?" "Certainly," she said, "there's no harm in dan-

cing; I love it; I dance, of course I do." "Well," said Dick, "I do too." "Now Mollie," said he, "if you'll show me the difference between the kind of life that you are living and the kind I am living I have no objection to my becoming a Christian."

Now I don't suppose there is any one in this audience who is little enough to get mad at the truth, are you? Of course if you are that little, you'll just have to get mad; that's all. But you say, "Mr. Biederwolf, be very sure you speak the truth," and I will. If ever I spoke or shall speak the truth under God's heaven, I will speak it now. It is not a matter of practice but a matter of principle. It is not a question about eating meat on Friday, or playing golf on Sunday, or taking a carriage ride on Tuesday, or going to a dance or elsewhere at any other time; it is not a matter of practice at all, but of principle of which I speak. And here is the truth. My dear Christian wife, if the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't make any difference between the life you are living and the life your unconverted husband is living, it isn't worth recommending to him. Now, you couldn't get mad at that if you'd try, and so I'm going to say it again. My dear Christian sister, if the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't make any difference between the kind of life you are living and the kind of life your unconverted brother is living it isn't worth having as a means of saving and purifying the soul.

Now Mollie saw this, just as you see it. Dick started down town and a few blocks away returned for something he had forgotten and found his wife on her knees by the couch, her face buried in her hands and she was weeping He lifted her up and asked her to forgive him if he had hurt her feelings, but she put her arms around his neck and kissed him and said, "No, Dick, it is I who ought to ask your forgiveness, and with God's help you shall have a different wife from this time on." Just fourteen months after that time, Dick, a splendid young man who has since occupied positions of honor because of his sterling worth, stood up in a large religious gathering and said, "For four months I have been a Christian man, won to God by the earnest, consistent, beautiful Christian life of my devoted wife."

Prayer

O my God, smite to-night our selfishness and our sin. If we have been in anybody's way, forgive us and give us some worthy conception of what it means to be a child of Thine. Give us to know something of the expulsive power of a real affection for Jesus in the heart until the unworthy and the indelicate and the suggestive shall have no more place and He who loved us and gave Himself for us shall be all in all. If either word or thought has been amiss in what we have tried to speak in wisdom and in love, do Thou, O Holy Spirit, correct

any impression that may not do honor to our God and leave the message for these young hearts especially, for whom the self-denial may be hard, as a guidepost on the path of the best and highest and purest to which the grace of God can lead. Amen.